



Rebuilding Afghanistan

Weekly Activity Update for March 17 – March 23, 2004

Issue 51

United States Agency for International Development

STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNMENT

Program Goals

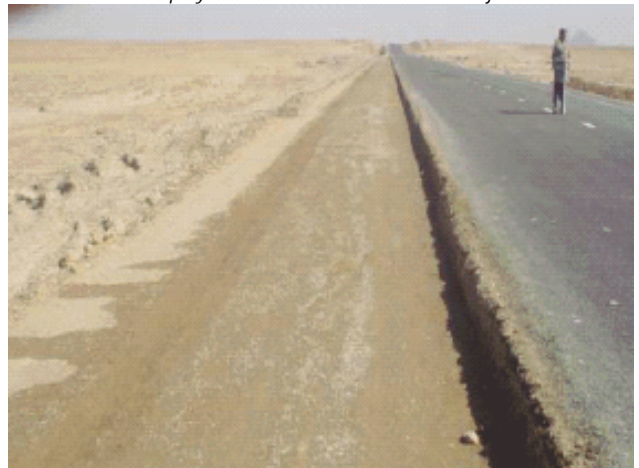
- Support the Bonn process: the Constitutional, Human Rights, and Judicial Commissions; the 2004 elections; and a free and independent media.
- Strengthen government budgeting, revenue generation (e.g., customs), monetary management, private-sector related legal and regulatory frameworks, and promote private enterprises.
- Build capacity to carry out other legitimate government functions and support reconstruction of health, judicial, education, economic, agricultural and transportation infrastructure.

Recent Progress:

- **Women's Day Ceremony:** On March 15, over 1,100 women and girls participated in the Women's Day ceremony in Mehtarlam district of Laghman Province in northeast Afghanistan. The event was funded by the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Jalalabad, and led by Laghman Women's Affairs Director Zaifan Safi. Other provincial leaders, including the governor, the security chief and key ministers, also participated. In their speeches they encouraged women to stand up for their constitutional rights, become educated, and to register and vote in Afghanistan's upcoming elections.
- **Empowering Women to Participate in Elections:** The registration process for the upcoming elections is in progress, but it has been difficult to get women from the rural areas to register, because many believe that only men are entitled to vote. USAID is working with local groups to change this belief by conducting 40 voter education workshops and 240 discussion groups in northern and central Afghanistan. As a result of the discussion groups, women are passing on the word that they have the right to vote. One participant said, "Many women from my village weren't able to participate today. I see myself as their representative. When I go home, I will explain to them what I have learned, so when the elections registration team comes to our village, we can all go to register together." Thus far, 7,000 women have participated in these discussion groups, but many more have indirectly benefited.
- **Kabul to Kandahar Highway:** The Kabul-Kandahar-Herat Highway is the southern half of Afghanistan's primary road system. The highway connects the country's three largest cities, and over 60% of Afghans live within 50 kilometers (31 miles) of it. On December 15, 2003, USAID completed the first layer of pavement of the Kabul to Kandahar portion. As a result, travel time was more than halved. It now takes five to six hours to drive between Afghanistan's two largest cities, rather than twelve. Currently, USAID is paving the second layer of the Kabul-Kandahar Highway, as well as constructing shoulders and putting up signage.
- **Kandahar to Herat Highway:** USAID will concentrate initial construction efforts on four destroyed bridges, and on 100 kilometers (62 miles) of the highway's most deteriorated section. These initial efforts—focusing on areas where travel is slowest—will be started in May, and will substantially reduce driving time.



Laghman Director of Women's Affairs Zaifan Safi is pictured, to her left, with the Governor of Laghman Province, Jan Baba Kharkhel. Next to the Governor is Deputy Jalalabad PRT Commander Major Lou Sand.



Completed shoulder for a section of the highway from Kabul to Kandahar.



Completion of stonemasonry on the Kabul-Kandahar Highway.

REVITALIZING AGRICULTURE/CREATING JOBS

Program Goals

- Increased marketable output of \$250 million in agriculture
- More than 500,000 farm family beneficiaries
- A reliable source of water provided to more than 500,000 hectares of land through irrigation rehabilitation
- 1,000 km of improved village feeder roads rehabilitated.
- Construction of over 100 village agricultural market centers.

Recent Progress

USAID's Rebuilding Agricultural Markets Program (RAMP) is a three-year program aimed at enhancing the food security and incomes of Afghanistan's rural population. It has two principal objectives, to increase agricultural productivity and output, and to facilitate effective linkages between producers, processors and markets. The program's budget is \$150 million.

- **Women's Poultry Production Program:** USAID is conducting poultry production training for women in Kandahar province in southern Afghanistan. Once trained, these women will then train other women in nearby Helmand province. The USAID program also provides a chicken coop, necessary equipment and ten young hens to participants so that they can start their own poultry farm.



Poultry production is typically managed by women and children.

INCREASING ACCESS TO BASIC HEALTH CARE

Program Goals

- 400 health centers renovated or constructed in rural areas, providing services to an estimated 12 million people.
- 11 million beneficiaries assured improved access to basic services in 13 provinces; 4.4 million women and children given access to services through USAID's health care initiative grants.
- 3,400 new community health workers, 990 midwives, 6,000 clinic staff trained.
- Make safe water systems, iodized salt, contraceptives, mosquito nets and other health products available at reasonable prices using existing trading and marketing systems.
- Strengthen MOH capacity at the national and provincial levels for guiding effective health care policy; develop a public health education program; determine a sustainable health finance policy; strengthen human resource development; improve hospital management; and expand and improve the HMIS.

Recent Progress:

The USAID-funded REACH (Rural Expansion of Afghanistan's Community-Based Healthcare) program aims to improve the health of women of reproductive age and children under 5 years of age through increased use of basic health services in rural areas.

- **Training Community Health Workers:** USAID works with local non-government organizations to train community health workers in clinical skills for basic maternal and newborn care. On March 13, twenty-three (22 females and one male) Afghans from six provinces completed training at the Malalai Hospital in Kabul. A total of 240 community health workers have been trained since the REACH program started, and approximately 800 more are expected to be trained by June 2004.
- **Clinic Construction:** USAID is currently constructing 78 clinics in seven provinces. The Kabul clinic is nearly complete and serves as the model for clinic construction in other regions.



Local non-government organization training health workers in Takhar Province.



Workers installing grouting material on ceramic floor tile in the Kabul model clinic.
